PS 3537
.H36 G5
1914
Copy 1

American Dramatists Series

The Girl in the Picture

Alexander W. Shaw

Class PS3537
Book .H36G5
Copyright No. 1914

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE

American Dramatists Series

THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE

A Play in Two Acts

ALEXANDER WILSON SHAW

BOSTON: THE GORHAM PRESS
TORONTO: THE COPP CLARK CO., LIMITED

Copyright 1914, by Alexander Wilson Shaw
All rights reserved

PS 3531
.H36G5
1914

The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

NOV 20 1914

©CLD 38852
no1

To my wife
Henrietta Ridgway Shaw
this little book is
affectionately dedicated

THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE

THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE

Act I

Scene—Deacon Backslap's living-room. George, son of the deacon, about thirty years of age, good-looking, well-groomed, is seated in a reclining chair, alone.

Time—About five o'clock in the afternoon.

George—I wonder what mother will say if she finds it out? Dashed if I would have thought it possible! What in the world could have struck dad, anyway? Think of it: A deacon in the church! President of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin! A man who has been preaching and leading crusades against vice for months until the papers are full of it! Think of it! Think of a man like that coming home in a cab—dead drunk! And in broad day-light! I'd give a dollar to know where he got it. It's a lucky thing that I answered the bell. If mother's new maid had gone to the door, it would have been all over the town by this time. As it was, I had to carry him up to bed. I don't think anyone knows anything about it except the cabby. Let's see, (*consulting his watch*) he's been in bed now about six hours. I hope he sleeps it off before mother comes home. If he doesn't—woof!—I can see a few shattered idols around here! But it certainly is odd how things happen at the wrong

time. Here I've invited my fiancée and her mother to take dinner with us to-night for the express purpose of having them meet my parents, —and dad's in bed, drunk! In the name of heaven if he wanted to get drunk why couldn't he have done it *after* seeing them? Er—that isn't exactly what I wanted to say, is it? At any rate, here I'd banked on this being a gala day! And Inez has been asking me so much about my parents and seemed so anxious to meet them,— she hasn't so much as laid eyes on either of them. And I've been praising dad's piety to the skies! Well, if the worst comes to the worst, I suppose I can keep dad in his room and say that he isn't feeling well. But Inez and her mother may take that for a frost. Well, I suppose I'll have to make the best of it. After all, dad may be in shape by the time they arrive, who knows?

(*Enter, from the rear, Angelina, the servant, an old Dutch woman, thin of face and body, with scant hair and long neck.*)

ANGELINA—Ach, eggscuse me!

GEORGE—(*looking around*) Eh?

ANGELINA—Eggscuse me. I thought I heard talkings, and I thought she vas downstairs.

GEORGE—Who? Mother? Mother hasn't come home yet.

ANGELINA—Ach, no, no, not your mudder— your vatter.

GEORGE—Oh, father's not feeling well, he's upstairs.

ANGELINA—Yes, yes, I know, I saw her come

in. Ach yes, I know. My husband used to get that way. Yes, yes, it's too bad—and she's such a nice man, too,—yes, she's such a nice man! And vat vill her vife say? She has such a nice vife! And she got along so good with her vife,—yes, she got along so good with her vife.

GEORGE—"She got along so good with her vife?" What in the thunder——? (*laughing*) Say, what's it all about?

ANGELINA—Ach, I know about it. Yes, yes,—I saw you carry her upstairs.

GEORGE—Saw me carry *her* upstairs?

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I saw her. Yes, yes, I saw her. But I keep my mouth shut.

GEORGE—In the name of heaven, woman,——!

ANGELINA—Ach, I not say nuddings,—for she's such a nice man, and she has such a nice vife.

GEORGE—What in the——? Say, do you mean my father?

ANGELINA—Yes, yes, your vatter. I saw her come home. But that's nuddings. She just had too much beer. That's nuddings,—my husband used to come home that way,—yes, yes, every night she vas that way; and she vas such a nice man, too; yes, yes, she vas such a nice man. But it didn't hurt her, no, the beer didn't hurt her. Ach, yes, she died. Till to-morrow it vill be ten years. But the beer didn't kill her,—she—she swallowed a cork. Ach, yes, she'd been drinking, —yes, yes, she'd been drinking,—but it vas the cork killed her. And she vas such a nice man, ach, she vas *such* a nice man!

GEORGE—(*mocking*) "Ach, she vas *such* a nice man,"—not another word, woman!

ANGELINA—Here's somedings she dropped in the hall when you vas carrying her upstairs. (*Holds out kodak.*)

GEORGE—(*taking kodak*) Oh, that's dad's camera. Thank you.

(*George puts the kodak on the table. At this moment the bells rings.*)

GEORGE—There, that's probably mother, now, and—er—(*as the servant starts to answer the bell*) not a word to mother about father, do you hear? —not a word, do you understand?

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I vouldn't tell her vife, no, no, I'll not tell her vife,—not me.

(*Exit servant. Enter Mrs. Backslap, a plain, fussy, middle-aged, managing woman.*)

GEORGE—Hello, mother, where've you been so long?

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*sitting down*) Oh, I've been gadding about. I promised to meet your father at Mr. Paynter's studio, but I was a little late, and when I arrived he had gone; and then I fell in with some club women and they took me out to lunch, and I've been shopping and making calls ever since. By the way, has your father come home?

GEORGE—Oh, yes, he came home some time ago.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Where is he, upstairs?

GEORGE—I think so.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*rising*) I'll go up, then. I

want to see him a moment. (*Starts toward side exit.*)

GEORGE—Er—mother!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*pausing*) Yes?

GEORGE—I wouldn't—er—disturb him just now. He's lying down, I think.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Lying down? He isn't sick, is he?

GEORGE—Oh, no,—er—not really sick, just a—a—headache. He'll be down in a little while. I wouldn't disturb him just yet if I were you.

MRS. BACKSLAP—You're sure he's not really sick?

GEORGE—Oh, no, he's not sick.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Very well, I won't disturb him. But—er—really, you surprise me, I never knew you to have so much consideration for your father before.

GEORGE—(*smiling*) Well,—er—you see, Inez and her mother are coming to dinner, you know, and I—er—suppose I wanted everything to be real nice, myself included.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*smiling*) So you're practising, eh? Well, it won't do you any harm. But you'd better be running along if you're going to dress for dinner.

GEORGE—I suppose I'd better,—and—a—mother,—you're going to like Inez, aren't you?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Why, of course I am, George. If she's only half as nice as you say she is, I know I shall like her.

(*Mrs. Backslap removes her hat and goes to the*

hat-rack in the hall, visible through the door-way at the rear, to hang it up.)

GEORGE—(*consulting his watch*) (*aside*) It's a little early to dress, but I think I'll see how dad's coming on.

(*Exit George.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*re-entering the room from the hall, sits down near the table and picks up the kodak*) I wonder if the film has all been used? Josiah's certainly got the craze and got it badly. He simply keeps me busy developing pictures for him. (*Examines the camera.*) Yes, as I thought, all of the film has been used. And I suppose it is now up to me to develop it. He's just like a child with a new toy. After he takes a picture he can hardly wait until it's developed and printed. But he's just like all the men,—he doesn't mind snapping the camera, but when it comes to the real work, well, I do all of that. Josiah never could learn to develop pictures. I wonder if I really ought to bother with this before dinner?—I believe I will, it won't take long and it may be a pleasant little surprise for Josiah. He might like to show the pictures to Mrs. Blair and her daughter. I'll see what I can do with them, anyway. (*Here Mrs. Backslap takes the film from the camera, and, going to the rear of the room, toward one side, where there is a shelf containing bottles, and a small table on which there are developing trays and a kodak developing-machine, inserts the film in the machine, pours in the developing*

solution from one of the bottles, puts the lid on the machine and turns the crank slowly.) I wonder what kind of pictures Josiah took this morning? Lately he has been taking nothing but churches. I believe he has a picture of every church in the town by this time. (*Pours water in one tray and fixing solution in another tray. Takes film from the machine and washes it in the water, then passes it through the fixing solution, and again washes it in the water, changing the water several times, then holds the film up to the light and takes a hurried glance at it.*) Ah, just as I thought,—more churches! I didn't think there were any in the town that he hadn't already taken. If there ever was a pious man! (*Bell rings.*) I wonder who that can be? It's hardly time for Mrs. Blair and her daughter. Well, this is done anyway,—thank goodness—and I'll hang it up to dry. (*Hangs film up by clips to dry against the wall.*)

(*Enter Angelina.*)

ANGELINA—Some womens to see you, Mrs. Slapback.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Slapback indeed! My name, Angelina, is Backslap, Backslap! Do you hear? *Back*-slap.

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, your Back's in front. Say not?

MRS. BACKSLAP—My back's *where*?—But who are the ladies, Angelina?

ANGELINA—They didn't tell me their names, but they said they vas members of some sinful society.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Some *sinful* society?

ANGELINA—Yes, yes, I vouldn't have thought it, and they said you vould know them because you vas a member, too.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*laughing*) Oh, I suppose they are members of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin. Show them right in, Angelina.

(*Exit servant. Enter four middle-aged, sour, sharp-visaged women, members of the society above named.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, how do you do, ladies, I'm awfully glad to see you. (*Shakes hands with them.*) Won't you sit down?

(*The ladies take seats.*)

MRS. BROWN—We just dropped in for a few minutes to tell you how we were getting along. The Committee is all here, and we thought we'd make a report, as it were, and you could tell the deacon about it.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Good. What kind of a crusade did you wage to-day?

MRS. GREEN—An anti-indecent poster crusade. It is just too outrageous for anything the way some things are being advertised, particularly shows at the theatre. Some of the posters are positively shocking.

MRS. BLACK—We've got the names of a hundred people who are displaying indecent posters on their walls, and your husband can hand them in to

the mayor, who will probably pay more attention to him than to us, judging by the way we were treated to-day everywhere we entered a complaint. It was positively maddening the way we were treated,—why the people just laughed at us. They seemed to think it a joke. But just wait,—the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin will show them a thing or two! Mrs. Brown, tell Mrs. Backslap how you were treated at the Star Theatre.

Mrs. Brown—Oh, Mrs. Backslap, I could have chewed that man's head off! I'll tell you how it was: We found one of the most indecent posters of all on the bill-board in front of the Star Theatre,—a picture of a woman—a dancer—in decidedly scant attire—oh, it was dreadful! Well, I went in and told the man in the box-office just what I thought of it, and he smiled and said he was sorry if I didn't like the clothes the lady had on,—think of it, what she had *on*!—and he handed me a pot of blue paint, and said I might alter the lady's apparel if I chose. Well, I just jumped at the chance, and I took the paint and started in to put a skirt on the picture of that brazen hussy, and by the time I had finished, there was a crowd of a thousand people around me. And when I returned the paint, what do you think that insulting ticket-seller said to me?

Mrs. Backslap—What did he say?

Mrs. Brown—He said, "Madam, you did very well. You certainly made a hit. Come around every afternoon and do your little stunt and we'll put you on a salary. We're in the amusement

business, you know." And I was that mad, I could have smacked him in the face!

MRS. BACKSLAP—The impudent thing! My husband will settle him.

MRS. GREEN—That's just what I was telling the ladies. It takes a real good man, like the deacon, to handle people of that sort. And what a good, good man your husband is!

MRS. BACKSLAP—Josiah is a dear, good man. Why his soul fairly writhes when he passes one of those theatrical posters on the street.

MRS. BLACK—I passed him early this morning—and he surely is a good man—he was taking a picture of St. John's Church with his kodak.

MRS. BACKSLAP—He seems to have a craze for taking churches. By the way, I have just developed the pictures he took this morning. Would you like to see them?

MRS. BLACK, BROWN, GREEN AND GRAY—(*in chorus*) Oh, yes indeed!

MRS. BACKSLAP—I haven't printed them yet, but I'll make use of a contrivance of my husband's for showing the pictures, much enlarged, on a screen, using the film only. The deacon is quite an inventor in his way, he made the apparatus himself. I'll show you how it works.

(*Mrs. Backslap drags from a closet a wooden frame about 8 feet high by 6 feet wide, covered with white canvas and mounted on feet, so that it can stand erect. This screen she places toward the back of the room and to the left of the middle. Then she brings from the closet what looks like a magic-lantern, mounted on a stand about 4 feet in height, and places*

this about 15 feet away from the screen and nearly in front of it. Then she gets the film from the wall where it had been hung to dry.)

Mrs. Backslap—(*holding up the film*) Now, ladies, this is the film. All I have to do is to insert it in the machine, which is just like a magic-lantern, (*inserts the film*) so, and press a little button which turns on the light, so, and there you have the first picture,—St. John's Church.

Mrs. Brown—Oh, isn't that too clever for anything!

Mrs. Backslap—Now, all I have to do is to turn a crank, and there we have the next picture, —St. Timothy's Church.

Mrs. Green—Isn't that nice!

Mrs. Backslap—(*turning the crank again*) The next picture is,—the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Mrs. Gray—It just goes to show what a good, good man the deacon is.

Mrs. Black—Indeed it does.

Mrs. Backslap—(*turning crank*) The fourth picture is,—the Church of St. Anthony.

Mrs. Brown—Doesn't it look natural?

Mrs. Backslap—(*turning crank*) The fifth picture is,—the Synagogue of Israel.

Mrs. Green—Do you know, I believe a man's character can be told by the pictures he takes?

Mrs. Gray—Oh, undoubtedly. It is certainly proved in this case. What a good, good man Mr. Backslap is. Everything he does shows it.

Mrs. Brown—He's one man in a million. Oh, what a good, good man he is!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*turning crank*) The sixth, and last, picture, ladies, is,—For heaven's sake!

(*Mrs. Backslap screams and staggers back, for the picture thrown on the screen is the full length photograph of a beautiful young woman, whose superb figure is almost without raiment, being very scantily draped. Mrs. Brown, Green, Black and Gray leap to their feet and scream also.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Can I believe my eyes? Is that the photograph of a woman? Or am I dreaming? Tell me, am I dreaming?

MRS. BLACK—I'm afraid not, Mrs. Backslap.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, it's a woman, it surely is! And her dress, tell me, how is she dressed?

MRS. GREEN—There isn't much to describe.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Then I *am* awake! Oh, there must be some mistake!

MRS. BLACK, GREEN AND GRAY—There surely must! There surely must!

MRS. BROWN—Examine the film, Mrs. Backslap. Are you sure it's on the film?

MRS. BACKSLAP—I can tell that in a minute. (*Takes film out of the magic-lantern, turns off the light, and, holding film up, studies it a moment.*) Yes, it's on the film, there's no doubt about it.

MRS. GREEN—Are you sure it came from your husband's camera?

MRS. BACKSLAP—I took it out with my own hands not a half hour ago and developed it immediately. But to make sure, I'll look at the camera. (*Examines the camera*) It's only too true, it's my husband's camera, here are his initials

on the bottom. (*There is a significant silence for a moment, during which Mrs. Backslap's face becomes set and harsh.*) Oh, Josiah! Who would have thought you so base! Oh, you deceiver!

Mrs. Gray—Oh, Mrs. Backslap! I am shocked, shocked beyond words!

Mrs. Brown—Can it be possible that all men are alike?

Mrs. Green—Do you know I never would have thought it! He's the last man on earth I would have accused of leading a double life.

Mrs. Black—And to think how he has been preaching against vice all of this time! Oh, Mrs. Backslap, what poor, confiding things we women are!

Mrs. Green—Bring the film over to the window, Mrs. Backslap, and let us get a good look at the hussy,—she's no doubt a creature of the underworld!

Mrs. Gray, Black and Brown—Oh, without doubt!

(*The five women go over to the window to examine the film. Enter Deacon Backslap, mournfully, with a handkerchief tied around his head. The deacon is a man of about fifty-five years, tall, slender, with a pale, thin, sanctimonious face, gray goatee, and fringe of gray hair encircling a large bald spot, and in dress resembles a minister. He does not notice the women by the window, and they do not notice him.*)

Deacon Backslap—(*mournfully*) Oh, this

head! this head! It feels like a fat whale. And ache—!

MRS. GREEN—Oh, the monster, there he is!

(*The five women scream. The deacon starts, and, seeing the women, looks guilty and backs away from them.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, you hypocrite!

MRS. BROWN—Oh, you dreadful man, go away! go away!

MRS. GRAY—You villain, how dare you face us?

MRS. BLACK—Oh, you scoundrel, go away, go away!

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*aside*) In the name of Jehovah! Did they all see me come home? What an old fool I am! What can I possibly say? (*addressing his wife*) What in the world is the matter, dear? Really, you mustn't blame me, you see——

MRS. BACKSLAP—Silence sir! How dare you offer an excuse? You old double-faced scoundrel! You hypocrite! Leave him to me, ladies, leave us alone for a moment, so that I can tell him what I think of him!

(*Exit the Crusaders, muttering expressions such as, "Give it to him good." "Don't spare him, the villain," etc.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*glaring at her husband with the film clutched in her hand*) Now, Josiah Backslap, what have you got to say for yourself?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*weakly*) Now, my dear——

MRS. BACKSLAP—Silence, sir! Silence! How dare you say one word to me! You infidel! You libertine!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Infidel? Libertine?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Silence! And I trusted you all of these years! And I thought you one of the best of men,—fool that I was! And what do I find to-day? I find you the contemptible cur that you are!—a shameful, base deceiver!

DEACON BACKSLAP—In the name of Jehovah, my dear,——!

MRS. BACKSLAP—Don't you call me "dear!"

DEACON BACKSLAP—In the name of Jehovah, Mirandy——!

MRS. BACKSLAP—Don't you *dare* call me "Mirandy!"

DEACON BACKSLAP—But—er—Mrs. Backslap—

MRS. BACKSLAP—How dare you call me Mrs. Backslap! I'm ashamed of the name.

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*wheedling*) Oh, come, come, now, don't go on so about it,—don't make such a fuss. You see,—er—of course I was wrong—er—weak, if you like, but—er—it wasn't intentional. I was just—er—persuaded to join in with—er—well, a rather merry group of—er—acquaintances, and—er—before I knew it—I—er—well, really—after all, what I did—er—thousands of men do every day—and—it is such a little thing, you know, such a little thing to make a fuss about!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*fairly screaming*) You monster! You perverted degenerate! It was a little thing, was it?—You, a married man! You, a

gray-haired father! A deacon in the church! It was a little thing, was it? You lascivious wretch!

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*astonished*) *Lascivious wretch?*

MRS. BACKSLAP—Yes, and worse! I have the proof right here. (*Shakes the film under the deacon's nose.*) I suppose you won't deny that this is your film—a film which I took from your camera and developed myself? Answer me a few questions, please. What pictures did you take this morning?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Pictures? What have they to do with it?

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*stamping her foot*) Answer me, I say!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why, I took—er—let me see—the Church of St. John, St. Timothy's Church,—er—the Church of the Good Shepherd, —er—St. Anthony's Church, and,—er—the Synagogue of Israel.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Exactly. There's no doubt about this film being yours! Now I'll show it to you. (*Inserts the film in the magic-lantern and shows the pictures of the five churches rapidly.*) Now, Josiah Backslap, those are the first five pictures that you took. What is the subject of the sixth one?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*scratching his head*) I—er—can't remember taking any other.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*sarcastically*) No, I suppose not! Let me refresh your memory. (*Flashes the sixth picture on the screen*) There it is!

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*throwing up his hands*) In the name of the Lord!

(*The deacon staggers back and nearly faints.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*sarcastically*) It was a very little thing to get a creature of the under-world to pose for you like that, (*pointing to the picture*) wasn't it? A very little thing, indeed!

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*aside*) Great God! Could it be possible that when I was drunk—(*aloud*) Oh, there must be some mistake!

MRS. BACKSLAP—No, there is no mistake! You have been leading a double life! (*Bursts into tears and strides toward rear door*) Oh, you deceitful, loathsome thing! You villainous wretch! I'll get a divorce! I'll get a divorce!

(*Mrs. Backslap rushes from the room, crying.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*in despair*) In the name of the seven devils! Was ever a man in a pickle like this? And I'm the President of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin! And a leader of crusades against vice! Good Lord!—Oh, my head, my head!—I thought getting drunk was bad enough, but this is worse, infinitely worse! Where could I have been? I remember going to Mr. Paynter's studio this morning to arrange to have Mirandy's portrait painted, and while I was there I met some people who invited me to join them in a glass of wine, and they insisted and pestered me until I just had to take it to be sociable. And then nothing would do but I must

take another. And then things began to get hazy, and after that—it's all a blank, all a blank. But where did I get the picture of that woman? I had my kodak with me, I know, for I had been taking pictures earlier in the morning, but I don't remember taking the picture of any woman. But where did I go after leaving the studio? Let me think. (*scratches his head*) It's no use, it's no use, I can't remember. Could it be possible that I went elsewhere and met——? No, no, I can't believe it! But there's no telling what a man will do when he's drunk. But let me see,—wasn't there some women in the studio? Ha, ha, by George there were! And it seems to me that one of them was making love to me, or was I making love to her? What an old fool I am! Could it be possible that it was one of those women whose picture——? Oh, Lord! And I'm at the head of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin! Oh, if I could only suppress this! But how can I?—Too many women know about it. And my wife threatens to get a divorce! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!

(*Here the deacon throws himself in a chair and rests his head in his hands. Angelina enters, without noticing him, and stops amazed before the picture of the scantily draped woman on the screen.*)

Angelina—(*holding up her hands in astonishment*) Ach, my! I didn't see that ven I vas in here before! And I didn't see anybody bring it in! No, no, I didn't! I did not! How did it get here? (*Deacon Backslap turns his head to*

see who is talking and Angelina sees him) Ach, eggscuse me!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Heavens!

(*The deacon leaps up and turns off the light of the magic-lantern and the picture vanishes.*)

ANGELINA—Ach, it's a magic-lantern picture! Yes, yes, that's vat it is! Ach, I like magic-lanterns! Have you got any more pictures like that one?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Like that one? For goodness sake, woman, don't suggest such a thing!

ANGELINA—Ach, go ahead and show them. You needn't mind me. I von't look.

(*Angelina turns her back to the screen and simpers.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, this is too much, too much! Out of my sight, woman!

(*The bell rings.*)

ANGELINA—There's that old bell again.

(*Exit servant.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—If this isn't the irony of Fate! Here I am, a man who never touched liquor before. I take a little for the first time, and then, like a fool, I go and do something positively indecent. Why, men who get drunk every day wouldn't think of doing such a thing! All of which goes to show that if I'd been used to

getting drunk, I'd not be in the pickle I'm in. Oh, why didn't I get drunk before? Why didn't I get drunk before?

(*Exit the deacon, to the left. Enter Max Paynter, Bob Scribbleton and Angelina, from the rear. Mr. Paynter is an artist, about forty years old, dark, entirely bald and has a waxed mustache; his friend, Mr. Scribbleton, is much younger, more handsome, and has a joyous, breezy disposition.*)

SCRIBBLETON—(*to the servant*) Don't make a mistake now, please, it's *Mr.* Backslap we want to see.

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I know, I know. She vas in here a minute ago. I'll get her.

PAYNTER—No, no, not *Mrs.* Backslap, *Mr.* Backslap.

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I know, I know, I'll get her.

SCRIBBLETON—Stop, please! We want to see the old gentleman,—*Mr.* Backslap.

ANGELINA—Vell, if you'll gif me a chance, once, I'll go and tell her. Vat names, please?

PAYNTER—(*to Scribbleton*) Oh, this will never do! We don't want to meet *Mrs.* Backslap of all persons! Say Bob, why not just inquire about the old gentleman? That's all we came for, you know.

SCRIBBLETON—Sure, go ahead. Perhaps the maid can tell us.

PAYNTER—That's what I meant. (*Turns to Angelina*) Ah, pardon me, but did you see Mr.

Backslap when he came home this morning?

ANGELINA—Yes, yes, ach, yes.

PAYNTER—Did he get home—er—safe?

ANGELINA—(*smiling broadly*) Ach, I think she's still living.

PAYNTER—*She's* still living? To whom are you referring? I was inquiring about the old gentleman, the deacon. Do you understand?—the deacon.

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I know, I know.

SCRIBBLETON—Well, did he get home all right? Tell us how he was when he got home.

ANGELINA—Ach, I don't know nuddings. *I* know when to shut my mouth.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, you do? Then you must know a good deal more than most people. Say, here's a little trifle for you, (*hands Angelina a small coin*) perhaps you may want to buy a sticking-plaster or some other confection,—you see—er—the fact is, we're friends of the old gentleman, and we were with him this morning, and we're rather anxious to know what happened to him after we put him in the cab. Did he get home all right? And is he all right now, or is he —er—sick?

ANGELINA—(*smiling as she pockets the money*) Ach, yes, she vas seek! He, he, he! Ach, vat a funny sight it vas ven the son opened the door and she fell drunk on the floor,—he, he, he!

PAYNTER—*She* fell on the floor?

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, she came home drunk in a cab, and she had to be carried upstairs.

SCRIBBLETON—*She*? Good heavens, is Mrs. Backslap a booze-heister, too?

PAYNTER—I never would have thought it!

ANGELINA—I never, no, I never——!

SCRIBBLETON—See here, my good woman, you oughtn't to tell us all that. We——

ANGELINA—Why, you asked me, didn't you?

SCRIBBLETON—No, no, woman——

ANGELINA—Vat for, then, did you give me the money?

SCRIBBLETON—We wanted to know about the old gentleman.

ANGELINA—Vell, vasn't I telling you?

PAYNTER—Oh, this is most exasperating!

SCRIBBLETON—Come, come, my dear woman, won't you please try to understand? I'll make it very simple. Now in the first place, you know Deacon Backslap, don't you?

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I know her good.

SCRIBBLETON—You know *her*? In heaven's name, is the deacon a woman?

ANGELINA—Ach, no, she's no woman.

SCRIBBLETON—(*exasperated*) *She's* no *woman?*

ANGELINA—No, no, she's such a nice man, ach, she's such a nice man.

SCRIBBLETON—(*throwing up his hands in still greater exasperation*) *She's* such a nice *man?* For the love of heaven! Really, I don't believe the woman knows the difference between a hobble-skirt and a pair of trousers!

(*The servant giggles and hides her face in her apron, and then makes her escape when George Backslap, Inez Blair and her mother enter. Inez is a beautiful young woman, with yellow hair, a*

superb figure and a refined, spirituelle face. Mrs. Blair is dignified and fashionable.)

GEORGE BLACKSLAP—Come in and sit down, mother's about here somewhere.

PAYNTER—(*recognizing Miss Blair, strides forward*) Why, how do you do, Miss Blair!

MISS BLAIR—Mr. Paynter! How are you? This *is* a surprise.

SCRIBBLETON—(*coming forward*) How do you do, Miss Blair.

MISS BLAIR—How do you do. Mother, allow me to present Mr. Paynter, the artist, and Mr.—er—really—er—your name has escaped me.

SCRIBBLETON—Scribbleton, Scribbleton.

MISS BLAIR—Oh, yes, Mr. Scribbleton.

MRS. BLAIR—I'm pleased to meet you.

GEORGE—What's the matter, Inez, have you forgotten *me*?

MISS BLAIR—I don't understand.

GEORGE—You haven't introduced me.

MISS BLAIR—Oh, don't you know the gentlemen? Why George, how funny! Gentlemen, this is Mr. Backslap.

(*The men shake hands.*)

GEORGE—Won't you sit down?

PAYNTER—No, thank you, we're in a sort of hurry, you know.

GEORGE—Did you wish to see my father?

SCRIBBLETON—(*embarrassed*) Oh, no,—that is —er—not exactly——

GEORGE—Is there anything that I can do for you?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, no, thank you. We just dropped in to—ah—well you see I just came along with Mr. Paynter. Max, tell Mr. Backslap what you came for.

PAYNTER—(*embarrassed*) Why the idea! It was you who suggested calling. I really came with you, you know.

SCRIBBLETON—The deuce you did! Oh—ah—of course—of course. But it was on your account that we came,—and then you're so much the better talker! Go ahead and tell Mr. Backslap what you came for.

PAYNTER—(*aside*) The nerve of it! (*aloud*) Er—you see we came to—er—er—do you know my memory is getting very bad? What the deuce was it, Bob, we came for, anyway?

SCRIBBLETON—Why you wanted to see about—er—oh, don't you know?—the—er—why the portrait you're going to paint of Mrs. Backslap.

PAYNTER—Oh, of course, of course! Funny I couldn't think of it! Yes, yes, I wanted to know about the—er—about the——

SCRIBBLETON—Costume, costume.

PAYNTER—Oh, yes, about the costume! Mrs. Backslap is to give me a sitting to-morrow, and I—er—wished to suggest to her how she should dress.

SCRIBBLETON—(*aside*) As a liar, he needn't envy me!

GEORGE—That was very kind of you, Mr. Paynter, I'm sure mother will appreciate it very much. She's just got her heart set on that por-

trait. Suppose you come along with us,—we're in search of mother ourselves.

PAYNTER—Thank you.

MISS BLAIR—Won't you come too, Mr. Scribbleton?

SCRIBBLETON—No, thank you, I'll just wait here.

MISS BLAIR—Oh, very well.

(*Exit Mrs. Blair, Inez, George and Paynter.*)

SCRIBBLETON—(*to himself*) By golly, that girl's the perfect image of a picture that Max is painting for the Paris Salon!—a full length picture of a beautiful, golden-haired girl, attired in a—attired in a—well—with very, very little attire! Could it be possible that Miss Blair posed for it?—she goes to Max's studio regularly. I wouldn't have believed it! Still, one can never tell how people view those things! That little girl of mine, Jeannette, doesn't think anything of posing like that, and she's a good little girl, too. But it's funny about that picture,—Max keeps it covered up. I wonder why he makes a mystery of it? Could he be using Miss Blair as a model for it without her knowledge? I wonder! At any rate, there's something very, very strange about it, for he wouldn't let even me see it. But you bet I saw it all right! When Max was out of the studio this morning I not only took a look at it, but I took a picture of it with my kodak, too. If Max knew it he would have a fit! But it's funny about that snap-shot,—when I developed the film there wasn't a thing on it! I never had that happen

to me before. (*Spies the kodak on the table and picks it up*) Hello! The deacon's kodak, I suppose? Doubtless the one he had with him this morning. Why, it's exactly like mine! Heavens! could I have gotten hold of the deacon's camera by mistake when I photographed Max's painting? Maybe that's why my film was blank! Holy Murphy, wouldn't that be a joke on the deacon! (*Laughs and slaps his leg*).

(*Enter Miss Blair.*)

Miss Blair—Oh, pardon me, am I interrupting a soliloquy?

Scribbleton—(*laying down the camera*) Oh, no, not at all. I was just wondering about you.

Miss Blair—About me?

Scribbleton—Yes. I'm a bit curious about something. Would you—er—would you mind removing your hat?

Miss Blair—Why, the idea!

Scribbleton—I'm awfully curious, I know. Please!

(*Miss Blair removes her hat.*)

Scribbleton—There! I knew it! I knew it! The very girl! Er—pardon me, I was just verifying something. Tell me, are you—er—are you an artist's model?

Miss Blair—An artist's model? Why, how dare you!

Scribbleton—Pardon me, pardon me, I didn't wish to offend, but your face is so exactly like a painting, a—a—paint—a—I mean—er——

Miss Blair—Oh, I suppose you saw my por-

trait. I am having Mr. Paynter do it for me and I sit for it nearly every morning.

SCRIBBLETON—Your *portrait?*

MISS BLAIR—(*putting on her hat*) Yes, surely, my portrait.

SCRIBBLETON—Er—would you mind telling me where you are going to hang it?

MISS BLAIR—Why, mamma said she would hang it in the parlor.

SCRIBBLETON—Your *mother* said so! Well I'll be——! But then nothing that society does surprises me any more! And why should it? If society can stand for the "Turkey Trot," I suppose it can stand for your portrait.

MISS BLAIR—Sir! How dare you!

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, pardon me, no offence intended, none intended, I assure you. But—er—say, perhaps you and I—perhaps you and I are not talking about the same thing! Tell me, is your portrait—er—is your portrait—full length?

MISS BLAIR—No, indeed, just the head and shoulders.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, just the head and shoulders! Oh-h! Then I don't believe I've ever seen your portrait. By the way, I'm awfully sorry about what happened to you in the studio this morning; I had no idea the deacon would act the way he did.

MISS BLAIR—The deacon? Was that old drunken reprobate a deacon?

SCRIBBLETON—(*surprised*) Why, don't you know him?

MISS BLAIR—I wasn't introduced to him, I'm thankful to say, and I'd never seen him before.

SCRIBBLETON—Is that so! (*laughs*) Excuse

me, but it certainly is funny that you don't know him.

Miss Blair—I don't see anything funny about it. What was he doing in the studio?

Scribbleton—Why, he came to see Mr. Paynter about—er—about a portrait. He's a great reformer, you know, leads crusades against vice, and all that sort of thing, and Jeannette and I—Jeannette's Mr. Paynter's model, you know—Jeannette and I thought we'd have a little fun with him, and so we invited him to have some wine with us. It took a lot of coaxing, but we finally induced him to take a glass, and a mighty strong drink it was, too, and after a little more coaxing, he took another, and by the time you came in, he was just beginning to imagine himself the King of the Cannibal Islands.

Miss Blair—When I came in he seemed to be making love to the young lady.

Scribbleton—(*laughing*) Maybe that wasn't fun for Jeannette!

Miss Blair—It may have been fun for her, but when you left the room and he began paying attention to me, it wasn't funny a bit. Do you know what he did? He picked up a photograph of me and kissed it repeatedly and said it was a picture of his sweetheart, and when I demanded my photograph, he put it in his pocket and called me his "Baby," and offered me a glass of wine. I was that mad I threw the wine in his face and flounced myself out of the studio.

Scribbleton—Jeannette told me about it when I came back. But tell me, how did your photograph happen to be in the studio?

Miss Blair—Why, I left it with Mr. Paynter to give him an idea of the pose I wanted for my portrait.

Scribbleton—Oh, I see. And, by the way, you didn't get your photograph back, did you?

Miss Blair—No, I didn't. That old deacon, as you call him, walked off with it.

Scribbleton—No, he didn't *walk* off with it, exactly, Max and I loaded him in a cab and sent him home.

Miss Blair—How disgraceful! What's his name, anyhow?

Scribbleton—The deacon's?

Miss Blair—Yes, the deacon's.

Scribbleton—Why—er—really, Miss Blair, I don't believe I ought to tell you. You see—er—you see——

(*Enter Deacon Backslap*)

Miss Blair—Oh, there he is! Oh, you horrid thing!

Deacon Backslap—(*drawing back*) (*aside*) Great Jehovah! The whole city knows it!

Miss Blair—What are you doing here, sir?

Deacon Backslap—What am I doing here?

Miss Blair—Are you following *me* around?

Deacon Backslap—(*astonished*) Following *you* around?

Miss Blair—Because if you are, George Backslap will knock your old head off!

Deacon Backslap—What! *George* will! I'd like to see George Backslap raise his hand to me! I'd take him over my knee!

Miss Blair—Don't you be so sure of that. At all events, I demand to know what you are doing here!

Deacon Backslap—Here?

Miss Blair—Yes, here,—in this house. How did you get in and what is your business here?

Deacon Backslap—Well, of all things!

Scribbleton—Why, Miss Blair! Is it really possible you don't know to whom you are speaking?

Miss Blair—Know him? Of course I do. He's the man who insulted me this morning.

Deacon Backslap—(*astonished*) Insulted you? Why, madam, I never saw you before in my life!

Miss Blair—Oh, how *can* you say that!

Scribbleton—It's all too evident you don't know each other very well. Pray allow me to introduce you. Miss Blair, this is Deacon Josiah Backslap.

Miss Blair—(*astonished*) What! Deacon Josiah Backslap? Oh, the *i-dea*! (*Laughs merrily and strides forward and extends her hand*) I suppose in that case I shall have to forgive you—for you see—your son—and I—are—er—engaged to be married.

Deacon Backslap—(*grasping her hand, heartily*) Oh, then this is the Inez my son has been telling me so much about! I'm awfully glad to know you. And this gentleman, (*indicating Scribbleton*) I have a faint recollection of having seen before, but I can't place him.

Miss Blair—That's Mr. Scribbleton. You were talking to both of us in Mr. Paynter's studio this morning.

Deacon Backslap—(*embarrassed*) Is it possible that I met you both in Mr. Paynter's studio this morning, and then didn't know either of you this afternoon?

Scribbleton—Oh, that's nothing. Nearly every man gets in that condition sometime.

Miss Blair—(*laughing*) Perhaps your headache (*the handkerchief is still around the deacon's head*) has something to do with your loss of memory.

Deacon Backslap—Eh? I'm afraid it has. I never had such a headache in my life.

Scribbleton—(*poking the deacon in the ribs*) Oh, you sly dog! (*Laughs*)

Miss Blair—(*nudging the deacon on the other side and laughing also*) Oh, you gay deceiver!

Scribbleton—Isn't it remarkable what speed the old fellows show when they once get started?

Miss Blair—It would seem so, judging by what I saw this morning in Mr. Paynter's studio.

Deacon Backslap—Is it possible that I—er—did not—er—carry myself properly while in the studio?

Scribbleton—Oh, you carried yourself all right,—that is, up to a certain point,—after that, *I* carried you.

Deacon Backslap—(*embarrassed*) Is it possible——!

Scribbleton—All things are possible!—And now I'll leave you to the tender mercies of Miss Blair, and, if you will excuse me, I'll hunt up that reprobate artist friend of mine. Ta, ta, I'll see you later. (*As he goes out the door, he pauses and*

winks) Oh,—you—sly—old—dog! (*Laughs and disappears.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—It would seem from Mr. Scribbleton's remarks and yours, too, that I did something that I—that—er—perhaps I shouldn't have done. Tell me, is that so?

MISS BLAIR—(*smiling*) I'm afraid it is.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Ah!—Er—did it happen in the studio?

MISS BLAIR—Of course it did.

DEACON BACKSLAP—I was afraid so. I remember that I was—er—persuaded to take a little more wine than was, perhaps, good for me. It's rather an humiliating admission to make, but—er—well, you seem to be in possession of the facts! Well, let's say I was intoxicated. Now, then, is that what you and Mr. Scribbleton were joking me about?

MISS BLAIR—(*smiling again*) Not altogether.

DEACON BACKSLAP—*Not altogether?* Then I did something else? Tell me, please, what it was.

MISS BLAIR—As if you didn't know!

DEACON BACKSLAP—My dear Miss Blair, please tell me! Was it—er—anything—anything concerning a lady?

MISS BLAIR—I should think it very much concerned a lady.

DEACON BACKSLAP—You don't say!

MISS BLAIR—Now, really, don't you know, or are you so modest that you prefer that others would speak of your conquests?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Conquests?

MISS BLAIR—(*laughing*) Oh, you rogue!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Please, Miss Blair, tell me what you mean. Please!

MISS BLAIR—I'd rather not, some one—your wife—might hear me.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, Lord! Is it as bad as that? What a fool a man can be!

MISS BLAIR—Especially if there's a woman in the picture.

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*fairly screaming*) What's that? *A woman in the picture?*

MISS BLAIR—Yes—in the picture—don't you understand?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Not exactly—that is—I'm not entirely sure. Was I—er—mixed up in any way with a picture—a photograph?

MISS BLAIR—With a photograph? Oh, yes, I believe you were. (*Laughs.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, I can't believe it!

MISS BLAIR—(*smiling*) Oh, don't let that worry you. I have a very forgiving nature, you know, and, besides, it doesn't matter so much now, because, you know, I'm to be one of the family.

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*scanning Inez intently for a moment, then apparently comprehending*) Great heavens, can it be possible? Your face! Your face! Oh, I can't believe it!

MISS BLAIR—(*alarmed*) My face? What is the matter with my face?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, I can't believe it!

MISS BLAIR—Tell me, what is the matter? What's wrong with my face?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, don't be alarmed, your face is all right, but—ah—would you mind taking off your hat?

Miss Blair—The idea! You're the second man to-day who has asked me to do that! It's getting to be a habit.

(*Miss Blair removes her hat. The deacon gazes at her for a full minute.*)

Deacon Backslap—I'm—almost—positive! Can it be possible? (*thinks a moment*) Would you mind, Miss Blair, doing me another favor?

Miss Blair—Of course not. What is it?

Deacon Backslap—Just a moment. I'll show you. (*The deacon takes a penknife from his pocket, and walks over to the white screen.*) Do you see this screen? Well, I'm going to cut a hole in it like this. (*Here he cuts a round hole in the canvas to the right of the middle of the screen, about ten inches in diameter, and about six feet from the floor.*) Now, Miss Blair, kindly step back of the screen, step up on this stool and look through the hole. (*Miss Blair does as requested.*) There! Now look straight ahead and don't try to see anything on the screen. Do you understand? Don't look on the screen. Now, just a minute. (*The deacon goes to the magic-lantern, and adjusting it, flashes the picture of the scantily draped woman on the screen in such a way that the head of the pictured woman and the head of Miss Blair appear side by side. The deacon throws up his hands in dismay.*) Oh, my God! It's the same, I swear it's the same!

Miss Blair—What's the same?

Deacon Backslap—Your face! Your face!

Miss Blair—Of course it's the same. You didn't expect it to change, did you?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, don't trifle, don't bandy words at such a time!

MISS BLAIR—I hadn't thought of trifling. I'm sorry if my face hasn't changed enough to please you.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, if it only would change!

MISS BLAIR—(*screams*) What!

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*walks over near the screen*) I mean—er—oh, I can't tell you what I mean. But would you—er—would you mind telling me something? I may seem rather curious, but really—er—

MISS BLAIR—Well?

DEACON BACKSLAP—You won't be offended, will you?

MISS BLAIR—Oh, no, go ahead.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Well then, when you were in the studio this morning, may I ask what you wore?

MISS BLAIR—What I wore? What a question!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, don't be offended. If—if it's embarrassing, you needn't answer.

MISS BLAIR—Embarrassing? Why, you actually speak as if I should be ashamed of my clothes.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, no, not at all, not at all. You needn't be ashamed of clothes, oh, no, indeed, not of clothes—if there's enough of them.

MISS BLAIR—Why, that's worse! Now you're insinuating that I have only a few clothes. I never——

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, you don't understand—you don't understand. But tell me,

please,—What did you wear in the studio this morning?

Miss Blair—Oh, just a little, white, filmy thing——

Deacon Backslap—Good Lord! Oh, heavens, I'm undone! I'm undone!

Miss Blair—Don't you want me to describe it?

Deacon Backslap—Oh, never mind, never mind, you needn't say any more. I suppose it's all true. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, what a mess I'm in, what a mess I'm in!

Miss Blair—I really can't understand what you're making so much fuss about. Why did you ask me to tell you what I wore?

Deacon Backslap—I was hoping that you'd prove an alibi—but you didn't. Oh, I'm in for it, all right.

Miss Blair—What a funny man!

Deacon Backslap—*and to think that you are engaged to my son*! Under the circumstances, miss, I think I ought to marry you myself.

Miss Blair—Oh, how nice if you only could!

Deacon Backslap—What! Would you throw over George? Oh, you heartless woman!

Miss Blair—Throw over George? I guess not!

Deacon Backslap—Do you mean to say you'd marry us both?

Miss Blair—What! Marry you both? I don't understand you at all! And why in the world do you wish me to stand on this stool and look through this hole? What's on the screen, anyway?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Now my dear young lady, don't look on the screen, please. Just a moment, now——

(*Here Mrs. Backslap, followed by Mrs. Black, Green, Brown and Gray, enters from the right, and, catching sight of the picture on the screen, and of Miss Blair's face looking through the hole in the canvas, they all rush forward and set up a scream like an Indian war-whoop. The deacon seizes a cover from a table near by and tries to cover the picture of the draped woman from the neck, down. Miss Blair holds her ground on the stool.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) Oh, you villain! I've caught you in the very act! How dare you bring that hussy into this house? Oh, you contemptible wretch!

(*The deacon drops the table-cover, and, darting to the magic-lantern, turns off the light.*)

MISS BLAIR—(*jumping off the stool, comes forward and addresses Mrs. Backslap*) Why, what can you mean? What did you call me?

MRS. BACKSLAP—How dare you speak to me? You low, brazen thing!

DEACON BACKSLAP—Now my dear——

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*stamping her foot*) Silence, sir! How dare you take her part!

MISS BLAIR—I don't understand. What have I done? (*At this point George Backslap, Mrs. Blair, Paynter and Scribbleton enter. Inez catches sight of George.*) Oh, George, what is the matter

here? I was called a dreadful name. What have I done?

GEORGE—(*putting his arms about Miss Blair*) My poor little darling! What is the trouble, mother?

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to George*) Stand away from that woman! Don't touch her! How dare you!

GEORGE—(*still holding Inez*) Why mother, this is my fiancée. Haven't you met her?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Your *fiancée? Miss Blair?* Oh, this is terrible, this is terrible! Oh, my poor son!

GEORGE—Why, what is the trouble, mother? What has she done?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Ask your father what she did. Oh, it is dreadful, dreadful!

GEORGE—Father, what is mother referring to?—Speak out, man, speak out!

MRS. BLAIR—(*who has hurried to her daughter's side*) (*indignantly*) Yes, speak out! What possible harm could my daughter have done?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, I'd rather not say anything. You see——

GEORGE—But you must! You must! Don't you see that by refusing to speak you make it appear that there is something to hide? Speak out, man, speak out.

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*reluctantly*) Well, you see it was like this: I visited Mr. Paynter's studio this morning, and, while there, was—er—persuaded to take a little wine. Miss Blair arrived at the studio and—er—er—well, I—er—oh, I can't believe it! It simply isn't possible! Now see here, I'm going to settle this thing right

now. (*Turns to Miss Blair*) Point blank, Miss Blair, point blank, face to face, when you were in the studio, did I take your picture?

MISS BLAIR—(*innocently*) You certainly did take my picture.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, my God!

(*Mrs. Backslap throws up her hands and faints, being caught by her son. The four Crusaders utter screams and faint also, two into the arms of Paynter and two into the arms of Scribbleton.*)

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*fairly screaming*) *What! That* picture?

(*The deacon presses the button and flashes the picture of the scantily draped woman on the screen. Miss Blair and her mother glance at the picture, utter one long, piercing scream and faint, falling against George, who holds up the three women with great difficulty.*)

PAYNTER—Oh, my God! Look! Look! The picture! The picture! Oh, I'm ruined, I'm ruined!

(*The artist drops, sprawling to the floor, the two women he is holding and rushes for the door, followed by Scribbleton, who drops the other two Crusaders. Deacon Backslap looks about him with an expression utterly woe-begone, throws up his hands and faints also, falling against the women who are being held up by his son, when the load, becoming too great for George, the whole bunch of them topple over to the floor.*)

(CURTAIN)

Act II

Time—The next day.

Scene—Max Paynter's studio. A couch, a small table and a number of chairs are disposed about the room. There is a sketch of a dancing-girl to the left of the entrance and one of a bathing-girl to the right; also various other finished and unfinished pictures adorn the walls. There is a large canvas in the centre of the foreground which is entirely covered by a green blanket. Mr. Paynter is seated at the table in an attitude of dejection, looking very glum indeed. After the curtain rises, Jeannette, a beautiful young artist's model of the brunette type, enters jauntily, dressed in flesh-colored tights from neck to toe, scantily draped by a filmy red scarf. Paynter is so absorbed in thought that he does not notice her.

JEANNETTE—(*tapping Paynter on the shoulder*) Hello, old man.

PAYNTER—(*starting up*) Eh? (*relieved*) Oh, it's you, is it?

JEANNETTE—Of course it is. Who did you think it was?

PAYNTER—I thought it was the police.

JEANNETTE—(*laughing*) You must have a bad conscience.

PAYNTER—I'm afraid I have, for it didn't bother me at all until I was caught with the goods.

JEANNETTE—(*smiling*) What were you caught doing this time?

PAYNTER—This time? Say, this is no joke. The fact is, I'm in a devil of a mess.

JEANNETTE—Oh, you poor boy! What's the trouble? Can you tell me?

PAYNTER—It's all about that picture, (*points to the canvas covered by the green blanket*) the one I didn't want anyone to see.

JEANNETTE—Well, nobody saw it, did they?

PAYNTER—Oh, didn't they? Well, let me tell you something: Yesterday a photograph of it was thrown on a screen before an audience of a dozen people.

JEANNETTE—A photograph of it? Impossible!

PAYNTER—All the same, it's a fact.

JEANNETTE—Who took the photograph?

PAYNTER—That old sneak of a deacon who was in here yesterday.

JEANNETTE—He did? Do you mean he photographed it on the sly?

PAYNTER—That's what he did.

JEANNETTE—Why, isn't that strange? When could he have gotten the chance to do it?

PAYNTER—Oh, he did it all right, for when I called on him in the afternoon, he had the effrontery to exhibit the picture in a magic-lantern to a whole roomful of people. I used Miss Blair's face, you know, as a model in painting the picture, though I never dared let her know it. Well, Miss Blair was in the room, and, to make matters worse, is engaged to the deacon's son, and when she saw the picture, she fainted, and so did her mother and a lot of other women. Oh, there's going to be

PAYNTER—Of course I know about it. Didn't I see the picture in your house? How dare you bring a camera to my studio and take a picture like that? How dare you do it, you sneak?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*mournfully*) Oh, then it's all true! I had hoped it wasn't,—I had prayed it wasn't,—Oh, this is terrible! terrible!—But do you know, your attitude is rather surprising? I always thought that artists painted pictures like that as a matter of course.

PAYNTER—Well, what's that got to do with it?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why, I can't see why you are so hard on me for doing with a camera what you do so often with a brush.

PAYNTER—You old hypocrite, what has the subject of the picture got to do with it? It was the way you took it that I object to.

DEACON BACKSLAP—The way I took it?

PAYNTER—Yes—on the sly.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why, that part of it carries no weight at all!

PAYNTER—My dear sir, "That part of it" is forbidden by a Commandment which says, "Thou shalt not steal."

DEACON BACKSLAP—Steal? I didn't steal anything. I can't understand your reasoning at all. What does it matter whether I took the picture in secret or openly? The thing that counts is: *The picture was bad.*

PAYNTER—What! How dare you criticize my picture?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*astonished*) *Your* picture? *Your* picture? Why, you're not a *woman*, are you?

PAYNTER—In heaven's name, are you crazy? Are you trying to make a joke of it?

DEACON BACKSLAP—No, I'm not, but it seems to me that you are.

PAYNTER—Now see here, you came in here yesterday and took a picture, and the picture turns out to be that of your prospective daughter-in-law. Now sir, what are you going to do about it,—blackmail me?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*astonished again*) Blackmail you? Blackmail you? See here now, don't ever call me crazy again. You're getting wilder in your talk every minute.

PAYNTER—Well, then, what did you come for?

DEACON BACKSLAP—I wanted to know if I really did get the picture here.

PAYNTER—Why, weren't you *sure* of it?

DEACON BACKSLAP—I was told that I took the picture here, and a number of things pointed that way, but I—I couldn't believe it. I was—er—not myself, you know. I had taken a glass or two of wine, and, not being used to it, it went to my head, and what I did after that I don't know. Everything's a blank, you know, everything's a blank.

PAYNTER—(*kicking himself*) Oh, if I'd only known that before! What an ass I am.—But who told you that you took the picture here?

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*reluctantly*) The lady herself.

PAYNTER—The lady? What lady?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Miss Blair. You were present when she told me.

PAYNTER—Oh, is that what she meant? Great heavens, how did *she* know?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Know what?

PAYNTER—About the picture.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Seems to me she ought to know a good deal about it.

PAYNTER—But why should she?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why, the lady's not blind!

PAYNTER—I don't understand.

DEACON BACKSLAP—I mean that the lady was evidently facing me when I took her picture.

PAYNTER—Oh, you mean that she saw you take the picture?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Of course she did!

PAYNTER—All of which shows that if you hadn't been snooping around with that damned camera of yours, there wouldn't have been any trouble at all. What a lot of devilish curiosity you must have! You saw something with a cover over it, and you couldn't stand the pressure,—you must needs remove the cover. And now that Miss Blair knows about it, I suppose there'll be hell. Oh, you old sneak! You blame it all on drink, but I have my doubts about your being drunk when you took that picture. I'll soon find out. (*strides toward side door*) Jeannette, Jeannette, are you there, Jeannette?

JEANNETTE—(*from adjoining room*) Yes, Mr. Paynter.

PAYNTER—Come in a moment, please. (*Enter Jeannette, in pink silk kimona.*) Jeannette, I believe you and the deacon met before?

JEANNETTE—Oh, yes,—I'm sorry to say.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Eh?

PAYNTER—(*to Jeannette*) I want to ask you a few questions about what happened here yesterday.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, I beg of you——

PAYNTER—Well?

DEACON BACKSLAP—The lady,—the lady,—you won't talk about it to the lady?

PAYNTER—Tut, tut, you weren't so squeamish yesterday when you were making love to her.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, Lord! What next?

PAYNTER—Jeannette, had the deacon been drinking when you and Mr. Scribbleton met him in the studio yesterday morning?

JEANNETTE—Oh, no, sir. But we all had a few drinks after that.

PAYNTER—Did he take any pictures with his kodak while you were with him?

JEANNETTE—No sir, none.

PAYNTER—Therefore, from the time he started to drink until he left the studio, drunk, he didn't take any pictures?

JEANNETTE—Absolutely none.

PAYNTER—Then he must have taken the picture before he got drunk?

JEANNETTE—That's the only time he could have taken it.

DEACON BACKSLAP—What! Do you mean to tell me that I was *sober* when I took that picture?

PAYNTER—I think I have proved it to you, haven't I?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, this is getting worse, worse, all the time! Oh, this is impossible! I can't believe it!

PAYNTER—It's true nevertheless. Jeannette was with you from the time you took the first drink until you were put in a cab and sent home.

DEACON BACKSLAP—My God, man, do you want to rob me of my only defence? There's some excuse for the man who does a thing when he's drunk, but none for the man who is sober. Oh, my! my! what can I say to Mirandy now?

PAYNTER—I don't care a rap what you say to Mirandy, but I'm interested in what you're going to say to me. Come, what's next? Do you demand an apology? a duel? blood-money? or that I marry the girl? Which is it to be? Come to the point, please, for my time's too valuable to waste on a saint like you.

DEACON BACKSLAP—(*astonished*) Duel? Blood-money? Apology? Marry the girl? In the name of the saints! Is this a house for paranoiacs?

PAYNTER—No, you've been brought to the wrong place.

DEACON BACKSLAP—By jingo, I *have* gotten into the wrong place. And I'll get out of it mighty quick, too. I never did like to talk to lunatics. But I'll come back, oh, I'll come back, Mr. Paynter, and I'll talk it over with you again when you're more rational.

(*Deacon Backslap rushes toward the door.*)

PAYNTER—My dear, good man, I don't give a damn if you never come back!

(*Exit Deacon Backslap.*)

JEANNETTE—Say, there's something fishy about this situation.

PAYNTER—Fishy?

JEANNETTE—Yes, fishy.

PAYNTER—I hadn't observed anything like fish.

JEANNETTE—I mean there's something queer about this affair. The deacon didn't seem to understand you.

PAYNTER—Well, if he didn't, it wasn't my fault, I called him all the appropriate names I could think of.

(*Enter Bob Scribbleton.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Hello, people.

PAYNTER—(*striding to meet him and shaking his hand*) Hello, Bob, you're just the fellow I want to see.

SCRIBBLETON—Good. (*Shakes hands with Jeannette*) Hello, little one. How's the lady in pink, this morning?

JEANNETTE—Fine and dandy. I wish Mr. Paynter could say the same.

SCRIBBLETON—Why, what's the matter with Max?

JEANNETTE—He's in an awful scrape.

SCRIBBLETON—What's the matter, Max?

PAYNTER—Oh, I very foolishly put my head in a halter, that's all. Do you remember my refusing to show you a picture that I was painting—the one over there with a cover over it?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, yes, I remember the picture well. Best thing you ever did!—Er—ah—I

mean, it was the best thing you ever did to put a cover over it.

PAYNTER—What's that!

SCRIBBLETON—I mean—er—a cover is very apt to arouse people's curiosity to a high pitch, you know, gets them interested.

PAYNTER—Oh, I see. It wasn't done, however, for that purpose, but it evidently had that effect. At any rate, the picture represents a scantily draped young lady who possesses a sweet, spirituelle face. I wanted to paint the picture especially for the Paris Salon, but I was at my wits' end for a model. I did not know any model who had a spirituelle face. There was a young lady who was having me paint her portrait who had just the face I wanted. But I didn't have the nerve to ask her to pose for my picture. I knew she would consider it an insult. So what did I do? I got Jeannette to pose for the body and I copied the face from my portrait of the lady. That's why I didn't wish anyone to see the picture—at least not here—in Paris, where the lady is unknown, it wouldn't have mattered. And what happened? Yesterday, Deacon Backslap sneaked in here with a camera and took a photograph of the picture without anyone knowing it. It happens that the young lady whose face I used is engaged to the deacon's son. The deacon exhibited the photograph on a screen to a whole roomful of people yesterday afternoon. The young lady was among the number. You saw the photograph on the screen at Deacon Backslap's and you saw its effect on the young lady and the rest of the women.

Now the question is: How in thunderation am I going to get out of it?

SCRIBBLETON—(*highly amused*) And so Deacon Backslap took a photograph of your picture, did he?

PAYNTER—He certainly did,—but I don't see anything funny about it.

SCRIBBLETON—No, of course not. (*Laughs heartily.*)

JEANNETTE—You are not very sympathetic.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, I'm chock full of sympathy, indeed I am, the fact is, I'm just trying to hide my tears,—a fellow doesn't like to cry before a woman, you know. (*Snatches Jeannette's handkerchief and pretends to wipe his eyes, and laughs again.*)

JEANNETTE—(*recovering her handkerchief*) Brute!

PAYNTER—Oh, let him laugh. Let him wag his ears, too, if he wants to.

SCRIBBLETON—It certainly is a funny situation. But say—er—how did the deacon know you were painting that kind of a picture of his prospective daughter-in-law?

PAYNTER—That's what I don't understand. He pretends he was drunk when he took the picture and didn't know where he got it.

SCRIBBLETON—(*laughing again*) Oh, he didn't? Well, all you've got to do then, is to keep your mouth shut, and he never *will* know where he got it.

PAYNTER—Unfortunately, he came in this morning, and, like a fool, I immediately jumped on him for taking a photograph of the picture without my consent.

SCRIBBLETON—(*laughing*) You don't say!

PAYNTER—I called him a sneak and ripped him up the back in great shape. (*Scribbleton goes on laughing and slaps his leg.*) But, as it turned out, Miss Blair had told him where he had gotten the picture,—though how she knew anything about it beats me!

SCRIBBLETON—That's news, sure!—But what did the old fellow threaten to do?

PAYNTER—That's another strange thing. He didn't threaten to do anything, except to come again and talk it over.

SCRIBBLETON—Then what's the use of worrying about it?

PAYNTER—Oh, how can I help it? I know what's coming—a lawsuit or a horsewhipping—the lady herself will probably start something—and I've got a reputation, man, I've got a reputation.

SCRIBBLETON—(*with sly glance at Jeannette*) So have I, but it's mostly for being a "De'il amang the weemen."

JEANNETTE—I should think you had!

SCRIBBLETON—At any rate, what's the use of worrying? You can't afford it—you won't be able to paint. I'll tell you what you do: Let me try to fix this up for you. I'm a past master at the game. Don't worry a bit and let me handle the case. How about it, will you let me?

PAYNTER—Will I let you? Say, if you pull me out of this hole, I'll—I'll—why I'll let you call on Jeannette.

JEANNETTE—Oh, indeed?

SCRIBBLETON—Thank you, old man, thank

you, but—er—well, you know, I used to think I cut something of a figure around here, but since the deacon made his appearance, I've changed my mind. I don't stand one, two, three, any more.

PAYNTER—Is that so? Why, the deacon's a married man!

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, he has other charms besides that!

JEANNETTE—(*blushing*) Oh, you men make me tired!

SCRIBBLETON—Hear that? We make her tired. She wouldn't say that to the deacon.

(*Jeannette giggles and makes a face at her tormentors.*)

PAYNTER—Well, how about it, do you really mean it? Will you help me out of this cursèd business?

SCRIBBLETON—Of course I will. Here's my hand on it. Now, Max, don't think any more about it. If any one broaches the subject, refer him to me. Understand? Refer him to me.

PAYNTER—All right, Bob, you're a brick. But how are you going to get me out of it?

SCRIBBLETON—Never mind. I've got an idea in my noodle. That's all it's necessary for you to know. Leave it to me, Max. Understand? Leave it to me.

PAYNTER—Good, you don't know how relieved I feel.—And now, if you'll excuse me, I've a little business to attend to. I've been engaged, you know, to paint some illustrations for a new book—Jeannette is going to pose for them—but I haven't

got all of the properties that are to appear in the pictures, and I'll have to go out and get them somewhere. One of the things I need is a big, old-fashioned camera.

SCRIBBLETON—A big camera?

PAYNTER—Yes, such as you'd find in a photograph gallery. Think of me painting a picture with a camera in it!—when I simply *hate* photographs! Irony of Fate, isn't it?

SCRIBBLETON—Take care, you'll owe your notoriety to a camera yet.

PAYNTER—Or—a—horsewhip. Ta, ta, I'll see you later.

SCRIBBLETON—Good-bye, old man, I'll hold the fort until you return.

(*Exit Paynter.*)

JEANNETTE—What did you say you would hold?

SCRIBBLETON—The fort, but what I really meant was—your hand.

JEANNETTE—I like your nerve!

SCRIBBLETON—Well, that's encouraging; keep on, maybe you'll like the rest of me after awhile.

JEANNETTE—Oh, there's so little left, it isn't worth considering.

SCRIBBLETON—Thanks. We seem to get along nicely, don't we? Did you ever notice it?—every time we get within hailing distance, we put up our props and take a swat at each other. But do you know, I've come to believe that we only give each other love taps, after all. Say, Jeannette, you're a little beauty, aren't you?

JEANNETTE—(*dropping her eyes*) Do you think so?

SCRIBBLETON—*Do* I? Why, when I see you I can't take my eyes off you, and when I go away, your image goes with me. Oh, Jeannette, I—I—wish you and I could—er—I wish you and I could love each other!

JEANNETTE—Oh, Bob, do you—do you find it so difficult, then?

SCRIBBLETON—Do I find what so difficult?

JEANNETTE—To—a—to love me—even a teenie weenie bit?

SCRIBBLETON—(*taking her in his arms*) My dear little girl! I never found anything so easy in all my life!

JEANNETTE—(*trying to disengage herself*) What's that! I'm easy?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, no, no, I mean—I mean it wasn't a case of *trying* to love you—the love just oozed into my system like—well, like water soaking into a dish-rag.

JEANNETTE—How beautiful!

SCRIBBLETON—Yes, it is pretty, isn't it? A dish-rag and water make a splendid combination, especially with a piece of soap.

JEANNETTE—Go on, go on, dear, and tell me the rest.

SCRIBBLETON—About the water and the rag?

JEANNETTE—Oh, no, about—about your love.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, yes, sure,—you know I'd do most anything to please a lady.

JEANNETTE—I believe you're just making fun of me.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, no, Jeannette, no, no, I

wouldn't make fun of the sweetest little girl in all the world!

JEANNETTE—Am I that to you?

SCRIBBLETON—Indeed you are. And now, dearest, when is it to be?

JEANNETTE—When is what to be?

SCRIBBLETON—Our marriage.

JEANNETTE—Oh, do you want to marry me?

SCRIBBLETON—Do I want to marry you? What the ——!

JEANNETTE—Why, I didn't hear you ask me!

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, just an oversight, just an oversight, I assure you. And now, when is it to be?

JEANNETTE—You must give me a little time, dear,—say in about six months?

SCRIBBLETON—Six fiddlesticks! Make it to-day.

JEANNETTE—Oh, no, I couldn't. I promised Max to pose for the illustrations for that book, you know.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, yes, so you did. Well, after that, then?

JEANNETTE—All right, we'll compromise on that.

SCRIBBLETON—Er—by the way, that book that Max is illustrating doesn't require any pictures of water-nymphs or Psyches, does it?

JEANNETTE—(*laughing, turns her back to Scribbleton*) No, you goose, it doesn't—just pictures of an actress.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, just pictures of an actress, —from whom Psyche, I suppose, could take lessons. But a promise is a promise and you'll

have to fulfill it, but that's the last posing you'll ever do.

JEANNETTE—Oh, I'm so glad of that! But poor Max! He's terribly worried, isn't he? Do all you can to help him, Bob. He's been like a father to me.

SCRIBBLETON—You bet I will! And that reminds me. Where does he keep his lay-figures, or his stage properties, or whatever you call the paraphernalia he uses as models for his pictures?

JEANNETTE—There's a lay-figure near the wall, but most of the things of that kind are in a room here to the left.

SCRIBBLETON—Has he such a thing as a stuffed ostrich, or a large white bird of some kind?

JEANNETTE—I think he has,—but what in the world prompted a question of that kind?

SCRIBBLETON—(*joyfully*) Never mind, my dear, never you mind,—just lead me to it! lead me to it! I want to look at that bird.

(*Scribbleton catches Jeannette by the arm.*)

JEANNETTE—All right, come on. But why this sudden interest in a bird?

SCRIBBLETON—Sudden interest in a bird? My dear, I've been interested in a bird ever since I met you.

(*Exit Jeannette and Scribbleton to left, laughing. Enter Mrs. Backslap and Angelina.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, dear, here I've been breaking my neck to arrive on time, and Mr.

Paynter doesn't seem to have gotten here yet. If I were late he'd charge me for his time, but since he is late, I suppose he thinks it doesn't matter. Angelina, are you sure that clock in the parlor was right?

ANGELINA—Ach, yes, I set her every morning.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Do you set it by the clock on the steeple at the corner?

ANGELINA—Ach, no, she's no good.

MRS. BACKSLAP—*She?* Why, what makes you say that?

ANGELINA—I've got no faith in steeple clocks, no, not me. T'other day I walked down town; the steeple clock on the corner said two o'clock, the next steeple clock I passed, four blocks away, said ten minutes after two, and when I'd gone a mile, I passed another steeple clock that said twenty minutes after two. Those clocks vas all different—they're good for nuddings.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*laughing*) Well, how *do* you set the clock, then?

ANGELINA—Ach, I set her by a rooster that crows every morning.

MRS. BACKSLAP—By a rooster? Of all things! But how do you know what time it is when the rooster crows?

ANGELINA—She always crows at five o'clock.

MRS. BACKSLAP—*She?* But how do you know it's five o'clock?

ANGELINA—She crows five times.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, Angelina, you numbskull! It's no wonder Mr. Paynter isn't here! I may be hours early or hours late.

ANGELINA—Ach, it makes no difference. She

can paint your face as well one time as another.

MRS. BACKSLAP—*She* can? But an engagement is an engagement! And now, Angelina,when Mr. Paynter arrives and begins my portrait, you mustn't leave me, not even for one second, do you hear? One never knows what these artist chaps may do. Judging by the pictures on the walls, it wouldn't be altogether proper for a lady to remain here alone; so don't you leave me, Angelina, don't you dare leave me!

ANGELINA—No, no, not me.

(*Enter George Backslap and Miss Blair.*)

GEORGE—Oh, hello, mother, I didn't know you were——

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*drawing herself up*) What! In company with *that woman?* How dare you! How dare you flaunt her before my face?

GEORGE—Why, mother! What does it all mean?

MRS. BACKSLAP—It means divorce—that's what it means.

GEORGE—Divorce? How can I get a divorce before I'm married?

MRS. BACKSLAP—You make a joke of it? *Leave that woman, instantly!*

GEORGE—(*putting his arm about his fiancée and drawing her close*) I'll do nothing of the kind.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Then *I'll* leave! Come Angelina, we'll go over here.

(*Mrs. Backslap strides toward door, at left, Angelina following.*)

GEORGE—But mother, won't you explain?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Ask *that* woman to explain—the hussy!

(*Exit Mrs. Backslap, haughtily, to left, Angelina following and imitating her mistress's manner.*)

MISS BLAIR—(*sobbing*) Oh, George, your mother thinks I posed for that dreadful picture. Oh, George, I never, I never did it. Oh, George, you believe me, don't you? Oh, George, oh, George, oh, George!

GEORGE—Of course I believe you, dearest. But there's something very queer about that picture and I mean to punish the scoundrel who is responsible for it. I think Mr. Paynter knows something about it, for when he saw the picture on the screen, he was startled, and sang out, "The picture! The picture! Oh, I'm ruined, I'm ruined!" and dashed out of the house as fast as his legs would carry him. That looks as if he knew something about it, and if he does, he'll tell me what he knows or I'll punch his head for him, that's what I'll do.

MISS BLAIR—But George, that picture was a photograph, and you tell me it was taken with your father's camera. Now, how in the world did your father, of all men, come into possession of a photograph like that of me, when no such photograph was ever taken? And what possible connection can Mr. Paynter have with it? Why, Mr. Paynter simply abhors photographs.

GEORGE—I'll admit, Inez, it's mighty puzzling, but in these days of the moving picture, a photo-

graph can be made to show anything. The photograph in question is a fake—it was manufactured—but where? I believe it was made right here—several things point that way— that's why I connect Mr. Paynter with it. In the first place, all of the other pictures that father took were pictures of churches, taken out of doors—the picture in question could hardly have been taken out of doors. Then father came here with his camera and you say it was here he got tipsy. What happened after he got tipsy? He probably doesn't know himself. Then he was sent home in a cab with the picture in his camera. Doesn't it look, then, as if the photograph were manufactured here? Of course it does. I'm almost positive it was. Mark my words, Inez, we'll get to the bottom of this outrage to-day, and we'll find bottom right here, in this studio.

MISS BLAIR—Oh, I hope we do. I can't stand your mother's scorn much longer.

(*Enter Mr. Scribbleton, from left.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Hello, people, good morning, good morning.

MISS BLAIR AND GEORGE—Good morning, Mr. Scribbleton.

SCRIBBLETON—Is there anything I can do for you?

GEORGE—Is Mr. Paynter about? We should like to see him.

SCRIBBLETON—I'm sorry, he's out at present. He left me in charge. Can I be of any help?

GEORGE—I'm afraid not. Our business is of a

rather personal nature. Will Mr. Paynter be in soon?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, yes—er—I mean—er—it may be some time before he returns. Will you—er—will you call again?

GEORGE—No, we'll wait for him, we've simply got to see him this morning.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh,—ah,—well, make yourselves at home, make yourselves at home. By the way, have you ever taken a walk through the picture-gallery? Mr. Paynter has a lot of mighty fine pictures on view.

GEORGE—I don't believe I have. Shall we take a look at them, Inez, while we're waiting?

MISS BLAIR—Yes, indeed, I'd like to.

SCRIBBLETON—You'll find the finest of them over there to the right.

GEORGE—Thank you, you're very kind, we'll see you later.

(*Exit Miss Blair and George to right.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Max was right. The lady is on the job and is evidently going to start something. Poor Max! They'll make it hot for him when he comes home.

(*Enter four members of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin, namely: Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Black and Mrs. Green.*)

SCRIBBLETON—How do you do, ladies.

MRS. GRAY, BROWN, BLACK AND GREEN—How do you do.

SCRIBBLETON—Have you quite recovered from your fainting spells?

MRS. BROWN—Oh, wasn't it horrible?

SCRIBBLETON—Horrible? What was horrible?

MRS. BROWN—The picture. And that's why we're here this morning.

SCRIBBLETON—Indeed? Why, were *your* pictures taken in the same way?

MRS. BROWN, GRAY, BLACK AND GREEN—Oh, horrors, no!

SCRIBBLETON—Then what is the connection between the picture and your being here?

MRS. BLACK—Why, we understood the picture was taken here.

SCRIBBLETON—I'm still in the dark, ladies; more light, please.

MRS. GRAY—How dense you are! Don't you know that we are members of the Lily-white Society for the Suppression of Sin?

SCRIBBLETON—I wouldn't put it past you, indeed I wouldn't. But even at that, I couldn't be expected to go into raptures over the amount of light you have shed on your reason for coming here.

MRS. BROWN—Don't you know that we are conducting an anti-indecent picture crusade?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, ho, is that so?

MRS. BROWN—We thought if the picture in question were made here, that this might be a good field for us to investigate. Do you understand now?

SCRIBBLETON—Well, I should say I do! So you've come to view the pictures, have you?

(*aside*) Oh, Lord, here's more trouble for poor Max!

MRS. GRAY—Yes, we've come to view the pictures, and if we find any that couldn't be hung in a Sunday School, well—there's going to be trouble, that's all.

SCRIBBLETON—(*aside*) I can see Trouble now, sitting in an automobile, whizzing along ninety miles an hour and headed for this spot.

(*The ladies examine the pictures on the walls, viewing them through lorgnettes.*)

MRS. BROWN—Oh, these pictures are dreadful!

MRS. GRAY AND MRS. GREEN—Shocking! Shocking!

MRS. BLACK—They are positively bad!

SCRIBBLETON—Ladies, you surprise me! Mr. Paynter is a clever artist, and his pictures are considered very good.

MRS. GRAY—We are not criticizing them from an artistic standpoint.

SCRIBBLETON—No? From *what* standpoint, pray?

MRS. GRAY—From a moral standpoint.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, I suppose you think that the ladies in the pictures are not sufficiently—er—not sufficiently upholstered?

MRS. BLACK—Such pictures are shameful, shameful, sir!

SCRIBBLETON—But what would you have the poor artist do? As you will note, this picture, for instance, represents a bathing-girl. Surely you wouldn't have the artist paint a lady going in

to bathe in a street gown, would you? A bath isn't taken that way. For my part, from a hygienic standpoint—that is, if the lady wishes a good wash—I think she's overdressed.

MRS. BLACK, BROWN, GREEN AND GRAY—Oh, horrors!

SCRIBBLETON—Now take this picture, for example. Here's a dancing-girl. You know yourselves that dancing-girls dress exactly like that. Why, I've seen some that didn't—but never mind, never mind! It isn't the artist's fault if they dislike harness. He's got to paint true to life, hasn't he? If he doesn't, he's laughed at. So what would you? As between you and the critics, he's between the she-devils and the deep sea.

MRS. BLACK, BROWN, GREEN AND GRAY—*She-devils*?

SCRIBBLETON—*Sea*-devils, s-e-a, ocean-devils, —er—ocean nymphs, mermaids, you know. But honestly, now, you don't think these pictures really bad, do you?

MRS. BROWN—Anything is bad that is harmful.

SCRIBBLETON—Harmful? To whom?

MRS. BROWN—To the young.

SCRIBBLETON—Then don't be alarmed, ladies, I'm the only one in danger, but I'll risk it.

MRS. BLACK, BROWN, GREEN AND GRAY—Oh, you horrid man!

SCRIBBLETON—But these pictures are mere outlines, mere sketches, don't you know. If you want to see genuine pictures, take a look at the finished ones in the gallery to the right. There are some real works of art in there.

MRS. BLACK—Come on, ladies, the more evidence we get against this place the better.

(*Exit the ladies to the right.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Good heavens, do they intend to raid this place? Poor Max! If he knew how things were going, he wouldn't think me a shining success in staving off trouble. But wait. I haven't had a good shot at the situation yet. Heigh-ho, what's all this?

(*Enter two porters, carrying a big camera.*)

ONE OF THE PORTERS—Where shall we put it, boss?

SCRIBBLETON—Let's see, Max will need it here. Put it over here, boys. (*Indicates point near centre of room. The porters do as directed and leave.*) Max ought to be home soon. In the meantime I think I'll take another look at that bird.

(*Exit Scribbleton to left. Enter George Backslap and Inez from right.*)

GEORGE—(*spying the camera*) Ha, ha! Look what's here!

MISS BLAIR—Why it's a camera, isn't it?

GEORGE—So Mr. Paynter abhors photographs, does he? What's he doing with this, then? Manufacturing more spurious photographs, eh?

MISS BLAIR—It certainly looks like a clue.

GEORGE—Looks like it?—I know it is. Let's stick around. We may find out something more.

Miss Blair—Suppose we go into the gallery again.

George—Good! Come on.

(*Exit Miss Blair and George to right. Enter Deacon Backslap from rear.*)

Deacon Backslap—(*spying the camera*) By George! Look at that camera! That certainly looks suspicious. I'm glad I came back. Maybe I'll find out something. There's surely something fishy about all this business. Mr. Paynter overshot the mark when he told me that I was sober when I took that picture. There's such a thing as proving too much. No, no, I never did it when I was sober. And if they made up one lie about me, the whole thing may be a lie. By gum, I'll just hang around and see what goes on. I'd like to know what they do with that camera. I wonder where I can hide? (*Here the deacon peers about him for a hiding place, and finally catches sight of the lay-figure resting against the wall with a black blanket partly covering it*) Ah, I've an idea! Here's the very thing. (*The deacon carries the dummy to the wings, and, returning, sits down on the floor with his back against the wall and picks up the blanket. As he does so, Scribbleton, unknown to the deacon, enters from the left, and, seeing the deacon, glides behind a curtain, where he watches the deacon.*) I'll pull this blanket up over my head and then they'll think I'm the lay-figure. It's taking some chances, but I'm about as reckless now as they make 'em.

(*Here the deacon pulls the blanket over his head and remains quiet. Scribbleton walks boldly to the center of the room, and, observing that the blanket is well over the deacon's head, slaps his leg and grimaces; then he walks over to where the deacon is sitting and deliberately trips over the deacon's legs.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, damn that dummy! It's forever in the way. I'll break my neck on it next.

(*Here Scribbleton gives the deacon a sharp kick on the legs and walks to the front of the stage, grinning. The deacon peers out from the blanket, and, seeing that Scribbleton's back is turned, reaches down and rubs his legs, drawing suddenly under cover again as Scribbleton turns, at the sound of footsteps from the rear, to greet Max Paynter, who enters at this moment.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Hello, Max, did you get all the things you needed? The camera arrived before you did.

PAYNTER—Oh, yes, I've got everything now. But say, Bob, did anything happen while I was away?

(*Here the deacon peeps from under the blanket and covers up again.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, nothing very much happened. But there are a few people in the other room who would like to see you on rather particular business. But don't let them bother you. Remember, refer them to me.

PAYNTER—Did the young lady put in an appearance?

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, yes, and her fiancé, too. They're waiting for you. But don't worry. Everything's all right. They didn't bring a horsewhip, but I've no doubt they've got a pistol or two.

PAYNTER—Lord forbid! Did Deacon Backslap return?

SCRIBBLETON—(*grinning*) Well—er—not so you would notice it. He's probably lying around somewhere sleeping off another jag. No doubt he'll make his appearance later. But say, Max, do me a favor, will you?

PAYNTER—What is it, Bob?

SCRIBBLETON—Those illustrations you spoke about painting, you know?

PAYNTER—Yes?

SCRIBBLETON—For the love of Heaven paint all of them in the next twenty-four hours, will you?

PAYNTER—Why, what's the hurry?

SCRIBBLETON—I'm in an awful rush.

PAYNTER—*You* are?

SCRIBBLETON—Sure I am.

PAYNTER—Why, how do they concern you?

SCRIBBLETON—Well, it's this way: The longer you take to paint those pictures, the longer you will keep Jeannette from entering into matrimony—with me.

PAYNTER—Oh, (*laughing*) so that's it, is it? (*seizing Bob's hand*) Congratulations, old man. You're getting a peach.

SCRIBBLETON—Well, I should say! Yes, Jeannette's promised to marry me as soon as those pictures are finished. So hurry up, Max. Can't you finish 'em to-day?

PAYNTER—(*laughing*) My, you're just as much

in a hurry to get married as some people are to get divorced! Sure I'll hurry. Help me a little, Bob, and I'll start in on them right away.

SCRIBBLETON—Good! What do you want done?

PAYNTER—Take hold of one end of this couch and help me carry it. (*They carry the couch to the right of the centre of the room and about fifteen feet away from the camera.*) There, that's about right. Now help me place this covered picture behind the couch to form a back-ground. There, that's O.K. Now go and fetch Jeannette while I get my canvas ready.

(*Exit Scribbleton to left. Paynter brings an easel, on which is a blank canvas, from one side of the room, and places it slightly to the right of the couch, but nearer the foot-lights. Enter Scribbleton and Jeannette with their arms about each other and looking very happy. Jeannette still wears the pink silk kimona. Paynter grasps her hand.*)

PAYNTER—I'm so glad, Jeannette, to hear of your engagement. I'm sure I hope you will be very happy.

JEANNETTE—Thank you, Max.

PAYNTER—(*raising his hands over them*) Bless you, my children!

SCRIBBLETON—For goodness sake, Max, get to work and start those pictures!

PAYNTER—(*laughing*) I never did see such impatience! Just a moment, now, until I explain the pose to Jeannette, and then I'll start. Now, Jeannette, you are supposed, you know, to be an actress, and the first illustration will depict

a scene at the photographer's where you are having your picture taken in costume. Sit down on the couch a moment and look at the camera, I want to point it at you just as if you were really being photographed. (*Jeannette sits down on the couch and Paynter, removing the cap from the lens, looks through the camera and adjusts it, and replaces the cap.*) There, that's all right. Now for the photographer. Let's see, (*glances toward rear of studio*) that dummy back there will do. Get that dummy Bob, and stand it up behind the camera just as if it were a real live photographer.

SCRIBBLETON—(*grinning*) Bully! I can do that all right!

(*The "lay-figure" slides limply to the floor. Scribbleton grabs "it," and, keeping the cover over "its" head, raises and carries "it" with some difficulty to the rear of the camera, where he stands "it" on "its" feet, pushes "its" head down in a stooping position in no gentle manner, throwing part of the blanket deftly over the camera, but keeping most of it over the head of the "dummy" in the manner of a photographer who is focusing his camera, then he adjusts the "dummy's" hands, placing them on the tripod.*)

SCRIBBLETON—How's that, Max?

PAYNTER—(*laughing*) If that isn't a hot looking photographer! Look at his legs! He's weak in the knees and his back's caving in! Puts me in mind of an old plug. Stiffen his pins a little, Bob, and make him look like a real live un!

SCRIBBLETON—A real live un, eh? Oh, I'll put some life into him all right!

(*Scribbleton grabs the "dummy" and jerks "it" into a more upright position. The "dummy" sags again. Scribbleton kicks "it" on the shins and jerks "it" into position again.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Maybe you'll stay put now, eh?

(*This time the "dummy" "stays put."*)

PAYNTER—Ah, that's better. Now, Jeannette, remove your kimona.

(*Rising, Jeannette does as requested, revealing her trim figure in the exceedingly scanty costume of an oriental dancer. Throwing the kimona on a chair at some distance, she sits down again on the couch and assumes a very fetching attitude.*)

SCRIBBLETON—So that's the actress who is having her picture taken in costume, eh?

PAYNTER—Exactly. Doesn't she make a pretty picture?

SCRIBBLETON—It's just as I told her. She could give Psyche cards and spades.

JEANNETTE—Oh, you! (*Makes a face at him.*)

PAYNTER—Now let me see. Everything's all right now except one thing. Do you notice it?

SCRIBBLETON—No, what is it?

PAYNTER—Why, don't you see, the photographer is focusing his camera. He couldn't do that with the cap over the lens. Take the cap off, please.

SCRIBBLETON—(*glancing dubiously at the "dum-*

my") Oh, let it stay on, what's the difference?

PAYNTER—Every detail must be correct, you know. Take it off, please.

SCRIBBLETON—Oh, all right, if you insist.

(*Scribbleton reluctantly takes the cap from the lens of the camera. Instantly the "dummy" throws "its" hands in the air and drops to the floor in a heap the cover falling with "it" and remaining over "its" head.*)

PAYNTER—Oh, fiddlesticks!

JEANNETTE—(*laughing*) I believe that dummy was shocked.

SCRIBBLETON—I know darn well it was shocked.

(*Scribbleton lifts the "dummy" and puts "it" in position again, kicking "it" a couple of times as he does so. As Scribbleton takes his hands away, the "dummy" sways unsteadily, and appears ready to drop again.*)

PAYNTER—(*petulantly*) If that dummy falls again, get a hammer and nail its feet to the floor.

(*The "dummy" immediately appears to pull itself together. Scribbleton laughs and slaps his leg.*)

PAYNTER—Well, I think we're all ready now. Let's see, where are my crayons? (*Looks about him*) Where in thunder did I put my crayons?

JEANNETTE—Perhaps you left them in the other room.

PAYNTER—I'll bet that's what I did. Hold that pose, please, Jeannette, until I get them. I'll be back in a minute.

(*Exit Paynter to right. Scribbleton immediately puts the cap over the lens of the camera.*)

JEANNETTE—Why, what in the world did you do that for?

SCRIBBLETON—I never like to see anyone hog the whole show.

JEANNETTE—One might think you were jealous of that old dummy.

SCRIBBLETON—It's a good thing for the dummy that it *is* old.

JEANNETTE—What strange talk!

(*Enter Mrs. Backslap, followed by Angelina and the four Crusaders. Mrs. Backslap catches sight of the dummy photographer and screams.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, there's my husband!

(*Mrs. Backslap grabs the black cloth and jerks it from the "dummy's" head; the "dummy" throws up "its" hands and staggers back aghast.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, you villain! (*Then rushes toward Jeannette*) Oh, you hussy, I'll tear you to pieces!

(*Jeannette screams and George Backslap and Miss Blair come rushing in. Jeannette seizes the cover on the picture back of her, and throwing it*

about her, runs screaming from the room. Mr. Paynter enters on the run. George Backslap and Miss Blair catch sight of the uncovered picture, so does Paynter.)

GEORGE AND MISS BLAIR—Look! Look! The picture! The picture!

PAYNTER—(*shrinking back*) My God, I'm undone!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) You lascivious wretch! I've caught you in the very act!

GEORGE—(*to Paynter*) You damnable scoundrel! How did you come by that painting?

PAYNTER—I—I. Say Bob,——

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) How dare you take a picture of a creature like that? Have you gone crazy entirely? Have you lost all sense of decency?

DEACON BACKSLAP—I—I——

MISS BLAIR—(*to Paynter*) How dare you paint a picture of me like that?

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) What have you got to say for yourself, you libertine?

DEACON BACKSLAP—I—I——

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*stamping her foot*) Silence, sir!

GEORGE—(*to Paynter*) Out with it, damn you! What made you paint a picture of Miss Blair, like that?

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*shaking her fist under her husband's nose*) You gray-haired, double-faced Turk! Is this your harem?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Oh, my God!

GEORGE—(*to Paynter*) You contemptible

sneak! You snake! Damn you, I'll smash your peanut noodle!

(*George rushes toward Paynter; Scribbleton grabs him and holds him back.*)

PAYNTER—(*starting angrily toward George*) What's that? My peanut noodle?

(*Miss Blair screams and jumps in between.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*grabbing her husband by the throat*) You skinny old rip, I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!

(*Enter Mrs. Blair.*)

MRS. BLAIR—(*amazed*) Good gracious, what's all this? (*Notices the painting, screams and staggers back into the arms of Angelina.*) Oh, Inez, oh, Inez, how *could* you?

ANGELINA—Ach, if I knew vat vas the fight about, I'd hit somedings.

GEORGE—(*to Paynter*) You villainous, crawling, slimy, degenerate paint swab! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You're a disgrace to your profession! By God, I'll have your blood!

(*Scribbleton still holds him back.*)

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) You old reprobate, you back-stairs devil, you—you——!

SCRIBBLETON—Order! Order!

GEORGE—(*shaking his fist at Paynter*) You low down, cowardly skunk, you—you——

PAYNTER—For goodness sake, Bob, say something, say something!

SCRIBBLETON—How can I? Order! Order!

GEORGE—(*to Paynter*) You infamous scalawag, you miserable cur!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) Oh, had I known what you were, I'd have left you long ago! You vile, wicked thing, you low brute! You——

SCRIBBLETON—Order! Order!

GEORGE—Answer me, damn you. Why did you paint that picture? Out with it, you pinhead!

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*to her husband*) Shame on you! A man of your age! Shame! Shame!

SCRIBBLETON—(*roaring at the top of his voice*) For the love of Heaven, order, order! Give me the floor, will you? Order, please! I'd like to say something about this picture, and after that you can fly at each other's throat if you wish to, but listen just a moment.——Now, in the first place: How was it that Deacon Josiah Backslap went home with the photograph of a scantily draped woman in his camera? The answer is simple,—*I put it there.*

EVERYBODY—(*in chorus*) *You* did?

SCRIBBLETON—Sure I did, but not intentionally. It was like this: The deacon's got a kodak that's exactly like mine, and yesterday he left it in the studio, and I mistook it for my own and took a photograph of that picture with it. When the deacon went home he took his camera with him

and of course the picture was on the film. That's all there is to it.

DEACON BACKSLAP—Well I'll be gosh-diddled! There, Mirandy, I told you I was innocent, didn't I?

MRS. BACKSLAP—Not so fast, Josiah Backslap, not so fast. Didn't I see you taking the photograph of a dreadful woman not five minutes ago?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Er—ah—ah—no—I wasn't—I slipped in here and let on I was a lay-figure, hoping I might discover how the picture got in my camera. And they thought I *was* a lay-figure and stood me up behind that camera to represent a photographer——

MRS. BACKSLAP—Josiah Backslap, if you were a decent man, how could you stand there looking through the camera at that dreadful woman?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why—er—er——

SCRIBBLETON—He couldn't see anything, madam. See, the cap is over the lens.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*suspiciously*) Was it on there *all* of the time?

SCRIBBLETON—Sure it was, wasn't it, Deacon?

DEACON BACKSLAP—Why—er—er—you could see it better than I could, the cloth was over my head, you know.

MRS. BACKSLAP—Oh, my dear, dear husband! How shamefully I have misjudged you! (*Throws her arms about the deacon's neck*) You're a good, good man, after all. Please forgive me.

GEORGE—All of this is very interesting, Mr. Scribbleton, but it doesn't explain why this outrageous painting was perpetrated,—Miss Blair, sir, never posed for it.

SCRIBBLETON—No, she didn't pose for it, but it's a portrait of Miss Blair all the same.

PAYNTER—(*dismayed*) Bob! Bob!

GEORGE—Ha, you admit it! And that devil (*pointing to Paynter*) painted it, eh?

SCRIBBLETON—Sure he did.

PAYNTER—(*amazed*) For God's sake, Bob!

GEORGE—What right had he to paint such a picture? It's outrageous! I'll have him arrested! No, by the Eternal, I'll break every bone in his body!

SCRIBBLETON—(*holding George back*) Just a moment, now, just a moment. It wasn't the right thing to do, that's a fact. But listen: Max wanted to paint a picture such as you see, and he needed a model for it who had a spirituelle face. The only person he knew who had that kind of a face was Miss Blair, but he didn't like to ask her to pose for him, so he got another model to pose for the body, and, as Miss Blair was having him paint her portrait, he copied the face from her portrait. It was done without her knowledge, and I must say it was a damnable thing to do!

GEORGE—Atrocious!

MRS. BLAIR—Criminal!

PAYNTER—(*aghast*) (*to Scribbleton*) You're making a pretty mess of it, aren't you? You cheese-head!

SCRIBBLETON—(*taking no notice*) Yes, it *was* damnable, it *was* atrocious, it *was* criminal. He ought to be horse-whipped within an inch of his life!

GEORGE—Yes, and I'll do it, too!

MRS. BLAIR—The scoundrel, he deserves it!

PAYNTER—(*shaking his fist at Scribbleton*) You backslider!

SCRIBBLETON—(*taking no notice*) Yes, by the Eternal, he *does* deserve it, and more, he ought to be hamstrung! Think of it, think of the low-down, cussed meanness of it, to paint a picture ladies and gentlemen, a picture that is destined to be considered one of the most beautiful pictures in the world, and think how damnably atrocious it was not to let Miss Blair know that she had been done the honor, *the great* honor, of having her face used as a model for the picture.

GEORGE, INEZ AND MRS. BLAIR—What's that? The *honor*?

SCRIBBLETON—Yes, honor, *the great* honor. Let me prove it to you. Look at the picture. In its present state it seems a little—er—a little daring, doesn't it? But it isn't finished, my dear good people, it isn't nearly finished. Let me show you how it will look when it's done. But remember one thing, what I will show you is only a very poor imitation of the complete picture. Jeannette, Jeannette, (*calls in direction of adjoining room*) tell the porters to bring in the bird.

(*Enter two porters, each bearing a huge, white wing, followed by Jeannette, who is now prettily gowned.*)

SCRIBBLETON—Show the men, please, Jeannette, where to put the wings.

(*Under the direction of Jeannette, one wing is affixed to the left shoulder of the lady in the painting,*

and the other wing to the right shoulder, in such a manner that when the porters withdraw, and a clear view of the picture is obtained, it is instantly seen that the painted lady has been transformed into a beautiful angel. Instantly the picture creates a sensation.)

SCRIBBLETON—(*jubilant*) There! What did I tell you? Was it not an honor to be chosen as the model for a picture like that? Is it not a most beautiful picture? Is it not a masterpiece? Could it have been painted by anyone except a great artist? And aside from that, is there one among you who is so base that he could find fault with it from the standpoint of morality? Is there anything low, is there anything vicious, is there anything indecent about it? Can you conceive of anything purer than an angel? Therefore, my dear friends, the lady who was so honored, so signally honored, to be chosen as a model for that angel's face, should go down on her knees and offer up thanks for the good fortune that has befallen her.

(*During the recital of this speech, Paynter throws out his chest and puts on a good deal of dignity, assuming the air of a great man who has been woefully injured and misunderstood. As Scribbleton finishes, Paynter grasps his hand. Everybody then crowds about the artist.*)

GEORGE—(*offering his hand to Paynter*) My dear sir, I have wronged you, cruelly, cruelly wronged you! But I did not understand. Do

not think me ungrateful. I realize now what an honor you have bestowed on my little sweetheart, and I'm sure she appreciates it, too.

Miss Blair—Oh, indeed I do! You were very, very good to select my face for such a picture. Please forgive me, too.

Mrs. Blair—What a dear man you were to have chosen my daughter! I hope you will forgive us all.

Paynter—(*smiling at everybody most graciously, and still with his chest puffed out*) You overwhelm me! Oh, I could suffer much, much more, if but to obtain a moment like this! Indeed I *shall* forgive you, with all my heart. Bob, I think that you, at least, will agree with me when I say that it is not best for a man that the truth should *always* be known.

Mrs. Black—(*pointing to the pictures on the wall*) But what about *those* pictures?

Scribbleton—Oh, don't worry, ladies, don't worry. When they're finished, those on the right will be cherubim, and those on the left, seraphim.

Mrs. Backslap—(*holding out her arms to Inez*) My dear, sweet child, how I've wronged you, too! Please forgive me. (*Inez rushes to her arms*) But why in the world, child, did you say that my husband took your picture in this studio?

Miss Blair—(*disengaging herself, goes over to the deacon and takes a photograph from his breast pocket, much to that gentleman's surprise*) There's the photograph that he took.

Mrs. Backslap—Why, Josiah, why didn't you say something about it?

Deacon Backslap—Why, I certainly would if

I'd known about—er—er—if I'd known—er—how to get a word in edgeways.

MRS. BACKSLAP—(*putting her arms about her husband's neck*) My poor, dear husband, what a martyr you've been!

(*Scribbleton puts his arm about Jeannette's waist; George Backslap embraces Inez.*)

SCRIBBLETON—And now that everybody's happy, I wish to announce that Jeannette and I are going to be married to-morrow, here in front of the painted angel, and you're all invited—to do the same!

(CURTAIN)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 018 391 873 4